



*Elko County*  
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- Planning/Zoning
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**EIS001904**

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**Fax**

**Name:** Ms. Wendy R. Dixon, EIS Program Manager  
**Organization:** U.S. Department of Energy  
**Fax:** 1-800-967-0739  
**From:** Charles J. Voos, Elko County Community Development Department  
**Date:** February 28, 2000  
**Subject:** Yucca Mountain Draft EIS  
**Pages:** 4

The following pages contain the comments of the Elko County Commissioners regarding the draft EIS for Yucca Mountain. If you have any questions or concern, please call me at 775-738-6816 or e-mail me at [comdev@sierra.net](mailto:comdev@sierra.net)

Thank you

Charles Voos

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Voos".

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The comments and concerns of Elko  
County, Nevada  
regarding the Draft EIS of the Department  
of Energy's  
Yucca Mountain Project

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The primary concern of Elko County is for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. The draft environmental impact statement (DAIS) regarding the transportation of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal (MTHM) of spent nuclear fuel and high level waste through this county to connect to a new railroad spur in Beowawe is not an acceptable transportation alternative. The Draft fails to address a host of concerns that this alternative might bring to Northern Nevada if this plan is accepted into the final EIS. The Draft is flawed because it has several transportation routes and methods of transport yet does not address the impacts or effects that would be incurred by these different scenarios

The Carlin potential rail corridor alternative fails to address the fact that to get this new spur, the old existing Union Pacific Rail Way lines will be used.

This heavily used rail system will be furthered burdened by at least three to four of these radioactive waste trains traveling these lines each week for the next twenty four years. The Draft EIS does not address the shared use of

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these rail lines that are also used for shipments of commercial explosives, military weapons and munitions, petroleum products and other hazardous materials. No where is the safety and environmental impacts considered in this Draft. The Department of Energy calls for shipping rail casks loaded with highly radioactive spent fuel in general freight trains and would require switching cars at the connection point thereby routinely parking loaded rail cask cars on side track for up to forty eight hours. Further, most of the spent fuel is from the east and Midwest and if this rail line was used, these trains would pass through our most populous cities, namely Wells, Elko and Carlin. The city of Elko is where the trains on this rail line change crews and it would follow that a crew change would be required for the radioactive waste trains as well in Elko, with a population 17,000 and an additional 10,000 people within 20 miles. No where in the Draft EIS is our County mentioned as a potentially impacted area. There are no provisions for any type of Hazardous Material training for our emergency response personnel and no provisions for financial assistance if we were to be subjected to a radiological disaster. The mention of upgrading of the existing rail lines as well as signalization upgrades, grade crossings or Right of way fencing is nonexistent in this Draft EIS.

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The entire draft of transportation modes appears generic and cursory at best. While selection of the preferred transportation alternative, in Nevada, is not included as part of the decision to proceed with the Proposed Action, it is clear DOE intends to use this EIS at some later date to make specific transportation mode, route and corridor decisions. No engineering consideration on the costs of construction and land mitigation for these alternatives is given with the response at one public

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hearing from DOE that the engineering would be done after the final EIS. At the public hearing in Crescent Valley on December 9, 1999, a man addressed this issue saying if one of our local mining operations were to submit such a Draft EIS, it would be thrown out summarily by the local federal agencies. The response was that it was no concern of the Department of Energy how other federal agencies handled their EIS requirements, if they wanted to be more restrictive that was their business, but the DOE would hold to the bare minimum requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to get the EIS adopted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The double standard between public to federal requirements versus federal to federal requirements is quite apparent.

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The Draft EIS does not answer the question of how this State will be perceived by the public and other states as we in Nevada become known as the national dumping grounds for the United States. It is difficult enough in economic development to overcome the stigma of being once the nuclear testing grounds for the Country and some sort of desert wasteland without the Department of Energy coming up with our next burden to bear. This nuclear waste site if approved will be here forever and the damage or the perception of it will never be repaired.  
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The Draft EIS proposes to permanently remove 230 square miles of land from public use not including the alternative transportation route land that will be required. The entire Draft EIS is simply too vague on the impacts to the Counties in Nevada and the assumptions regarding transportation alternate routes leaves too many unanswered questions. A true assessment of this Draft for decisions purposes is not possible as presented to us at this time. The Department of Energy has a total disregard for our State, its land and its people as exemplified by this Draft EIS.

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